

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0249

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 1477

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, PARM, BR, GW

SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR DEBATE--OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON
BRAZILIAN-ARGENTINE COOPERATION AND OTHER TOPICS

1.

SUMMARY. UNNAMED FONMIN OFFICIALS CITED IN A GAZETA
MERCANTIL BACKGROUNDER COMMENTED THAT BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA HAVE
AN EXCUSE TO UNITE THEIR FORCES AGAINST AMERICAN PRESSURES
AGAINST NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS. A GOB SCIENCE OFFICIAL CLAIMED THAT A
BRAZILIAN-ARGENTINE AGREEMENT IS NEAR, AND THAT IT WOULD
REPRESENT THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL AXIS. END SUMMARY.

2. US-BRAZILIAN RELATIONS WILL SUFFER DURING THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION BECAUSE OF THE NUCLEAR ISSUE, ACCORDING TO
UNNAMED FOREIGN MINISTRY DIPLOMATS QUOTED IN A GAZETA MERCANTIL
(FEB. 19) ARTICLE. THE DIPLOMATS THOUGHT THE U.S. COULD BE
EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN "SPECIAL RELATIONS" WITH DEMOCRATIC REGIMES
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LIKE MEXICO AND VENEZUELA, AND TO MAINTAIN NORMAL RELATIONS
WITH BOLIVA AND CHILE, EVEN THOUGH THEY INFRINGE ON ONE OF
THE CAPITAL SINS OF PRESIDENT CARTER: HUMAN RIGHTS. THE SAME
CANNOT BE SAID ABOUT BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, THE ARTICLE SAID.
BESIDES BEING "STRONG GOVERNMENT REGIMES," THE TWO COUNTRIES
ASPIRE TO DEVELOP AN ADVANCED NUCLEAR PROGRAM, GOING AGAINST
PRESIDENT CARTER'S SECOND OBJECTIVE: THE FIGHT FOR NONPROLIFER-

ATION OF ATOMIC DEVICES. THE DIPLOMATS REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT THE BRAZIL-US MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WAS BROADER IN SCOPE THAN THE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM ESTABLISHED BY PRESIDENTS CARTER AND PORTILLO. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE US-MEXICAN DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, REVEALS THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF BRAZIL'S SIGNING A SIMILAR AGREEMENT, THE ARTICLE SAID. TO PRESIDENT

CARTER, ACCORDING TO THE DIPLOMATS, "COMMON ACTION IN FAVOR OF PEACE" (COMMENT:

APPARENT REFERENCE TO (BUT INCORRECT QUOTE FROM) THE US-MEXICAN COMMUNIQUE) SIGNIFIES COMMON ACTION IN FAVOR OF THE NONPROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS AND THE ELIMINATION OF THE ANXIETIES MANIFESTED BY THIRD COUNTRIES IN THIS FIELD. IT HAS BECOME DIFFICULT, THE DIPLOMATS REPT-EDLY SAID, TO TRACE THE FUTUROLOGY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF PRESIDENT CARTER IN RELATION TO LATIN AMERICA FOR THE SIMPLE FACT THAT THERE EXISTS NO GENERAL DIRECTION. "IT IS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THE DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION WILL FIND ITSELF FACING TWO INTRANSIGENT ADVERSARIES IN ITS EFFORTS TO REACH ITS OBJECTIVES OF STOPPING NUCLEAR PROGRESS--BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, WHICH NOW HAVE AN EXTERNAL EXCUSE (AMERICAN PRESSURES AGAINST NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS) TO UNITE THEIR FORCES."

3. THE PRESIDENT OF BRAZIL'S NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CNPQ), JOSE DION, ACCORDING TO GAZETA MERCANTIL (FEB. 18), SAID: "A FORMAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA WOULD BE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES SINCE IT WOULD REPRESENT THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL AXIS WITH REASONABLE POWER TO STABILIZE PRESSURES THAT WE SUFFER TODAY AGAINST THE CONFIDENTIAL

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IMPLANTATION OF OUR PROGRAM OF NUCLEAR ENERGY." ALTHOUGH DION OBSERVED THAT THE QUESTIONS OF COOPERATION WITH ARGENTINA FELL

WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, HE BELIEVED AN AGREEMENT WITH ARGENTINA WAS NOT FAR AWAY. DION SAID PRESSURES SUFFERED BY BRAZIL WERE COMMERCIAL MANEUVERS. THE GOB IS RIGOROUSLY CERTAIN THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE MAINTAINED, DION REPORTEDLY SAID. HE CITED BRAZIL'S PEACEFUL HISTORY, AND COMMENTED THAT THE COUNTRIES WHICH HAD ALLEGED THAT BRAZIL HAD MILITARY MOTIVES IN ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAMS WERE ONES THAT EITHER HAD FOUGHT WARS OF CONQUEST OR CONSOLIDATION OF INTERESTS, OR WERE KNOWN DICTATORSHIPS (READ USSR). ACCORDING TO GAZETA, DION SAID THAT "IF (THOSE COUNTRIES) MANAGE TO PREVENT BRAZIL FROM REPROCESSING ITS ATOMIC RESIDUES FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING NEW REACTOR FUEL, THAT IS IF THEY PREVENT US FROM POSSESSING PLUTONIUM, WE WILL BE CONDEMNED TO A CONDITION OF ECONOMIC INFERIORITY AND ETERNAL DEPENDENCE ON SUPPLIES OF ATOMIC FUEL."

4. COMMENT. DION HAS NO DIRECT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM OR FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH, ALTHOUGH CNPQ HAS SOME INVOLVEMENT WITH TRAINING OF PERSONNEL FOR THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

5. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, THE BRAZILIAN AND ARGENTINE PRESS HAVE CARRIED REFERENCES TO POSSIBLE COOPERATION BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE NUCLEAR QUESTION (E.G., BUENOS AIRES 1462, 1427). THE RECENT COMMENTS IN THE BRAZILIAN PRESS, HOWEVER, HAVE FOCUSED ON ONE PARTICULAR KIND OF COOPERATION--AGAINST FOREIGN NONPROLIFERATION EFFORTS AFFECTING BRAZIL OR ARGENTINA. SUCH COOPERATION IS QUITE DIFFERENT IN PURPOSE THAN, FOR INSTANCE, COOPERATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF STEMMING PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES IN ORDER TO REDUCE BILATEAL SECURITY CONCERNS. THE LATTER TYPE OF COOPERATION HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE BRAZILIAN PRESS, AND NO PUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTS BY GOB OFFICIALS HAVE GIVEN ANY INDICATION THAT THE GOB IS THINKING ALONG THIS LINE. (WE DID ON ONE OCCASION, THOUGH, HEAR PRIVATELY THAT THE GOB WAS CONSIDERING THIS QUESTION (76 BRASILIA 9067).)
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